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PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$1.5 Million to Design Northern Strand Community Trail

Funding Will Produce Design and Construction Documents for Trail Construction

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Conservation & Recreation

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**LYNN** — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced the commitment of at least \$1.5 million to fund designs for the Northern Strand Community Trail in Everett, Lynn, Malden, Revere, and Saugus. The funding, awarded through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA) Gateway City Parks Program, enables the design of the trail, development of bid-ready construction documents, and receipt of all necessary construction permits. When completed, the trail will span ten miles and run through the communities of Everett, Lynn, Malden, Revere, and Saugus along the rail bed of the former Saugus Branch Railroad.

“Rail trails link communities and residents across the Commonwealth and provide numerous environmental, recreational, and transit benefits,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “Our Administration’s Trails Team works hard to collaborate across state government and with municipalities to advance projects that can maintain and expand some of Massachusetts’ best outdoor spaces for generations to come.”

“Everett, Lynn, Malden, Revere, and Saugus are excellent partners that we look forward to working with in order to complete the Northern Strand Community Trail so more opportunities are available for individuals and families to enjoy Massachusetts’ beautiful outdoors,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**.

“Rail trails are an excellent way for individuals to help the Commonwealth reduce carbon emissions while promoting the enjoyment of open space,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “As access to the natural environment remains a priority of the Baker-Polito Administration, I am pleased to see numerous communities commit to providing residents the opportunity to enjoy the Commonwealth’s natural, cultural, and historic resources for future generations.”

The investment to the Northern Strand Community Trail touches upon three key Baker-Polito Administration initiatives. Recently, Governor Baker established an Interagency Trails Team, which is led by the Governor’s office and is composed of staff from EEA, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The purpose of the team is to help develop a unified vision for a trails network and translate that into strategic investments, policy innovations to facilitate development of trails, and shared partnerships with municipal partners. The Northern Strand Community Trail project is a direct result of the group’s “one team, one plan, one vision” approach to advance multi-use trails across the Commonwealth.

“The money being committed to create the Northern Strand Community Trail is money well spent,” **said Transportation Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack**. “This ten mile corridor will be a pathway connecting neighborhoods, linking residents to business districts and, in general, improving the quality of life for people in several communities. The Baker-Polito Administration has appreciated the collaboration that is

allowing this Trail project to advance and looks forward to the economic benefits and the lifestyle benefits the Trail will afford when completed.”

Additionally, under the leadership of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (HED), with the active participation of Secretaries Beaton and Pollack, the Administration has been working with City officials, legislators, and other leaders as part of the Lynn Economic Advancement and Development Team (LEAD Team) to focus time, attention, and resources on the city. The Northern Strand Community Trail complements the variety of economic development and other efforts the LEAD Team has helped to advance, including the Gear Works Project, 254 Lynnway Development, and ongoing completion of a Waterfront Open Space Plan. The trail will provide walking and biking access to these projects, downtown Lynn, and many other destinations including DCR’s Lynn Shore and Nahant Beach Reservations. Transportation options for Lynn residents are another LEAD Team concern, and the effort to design and build the on-road portion of the Northern Strand in Lynn will dovetail with a broader look at transportation assets and priorities.

“Diverse transportation options and recreational assets are critical to the long-term economic sustainability of communities,” **said Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash.**

“Northern Strand Community Trail is the result of ongoing cooperation with our colleagues at EEA and MassDOT, and we look forward to advancing more successful projects across the state through this effective partnership.”

Furthermore, MassDOT and EEA have been cooperatively working to address transportation infrastructure and greenhouse gas emissions. Provision of a practical, safe route of relatively short distance between major cities helps to encourage walking and biking as an alternative to driving, thus reducing emissions and helping the Commonwealth comply with the Global Warming Solutions Act.

“This is great news for the City of Lynn that will allow this project to take a big step towards becoming a reality,” **said Lynn Mayor Thomas M. McGee.** “I look forward to engaging community stakeholders to move this priority project forward.”

“This is a big step towards achieving our goal of having an accessible and safe community path in Lynn,” **said State Representative Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn).** “We are grateful to the administration for this funding and so proud of all of the community leaders, residents, and local officials who have been working hard on this project for a long time.”

“This will begin a long-stalled plan to include Lynn in the Northern Strand Community Trail,” **said State Representative Dan Cahill (D-Lynn).** “This trail, which has been an urban scar and missing link to the trail, will provide cyclists and pedestrians a recreational path that is family-friendly and will be an asset to our community.”

“I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration for making such a significant financial investment in the Northern Strand Community Trail project,” **said State Representative Donald Wong (R-Saugus)**. “This funding will help to facilitate the creation of an inter-connected bike path that will provide many important environmental and recreational benefits for the residents of Saugus, Lynn and surrounding communities.”

“The Northern Strand Community Trail is a fantastic example of the kinds of sustainable, regional transportation projects we in Massachusetts should aspire to build. These funds awarded by the Gateway Cities Park Program will improve quality of life and the environment for everyone by providing an accessible, car free, well-designed alternative route to the sea,” **said State Representative Lori Ehrlich (D-Marblehead)**. “This project will not only have benefits for conservation and the environment, it will also promote economic growth by connecting our communities.”

The Northern Strand Community Trail project is a cooperative effort involving funding and support from the Solomon Foundation and the Barr Foundation, and is a partnership between the Commonwealth’s Trails Team, the Foundations, the five communities, and Bike to the Sea. A public process to discuss the project and its design will begin in the coming months.

“We at the Solomon Foundation are proud to partner with the Barr Foundation and the Commonwealth in completing the Northern Strand Community Path. Soon tens of thousands of residents in five communities will have a new way to connect with each other and with the natural beauty of their marshes, rivers and beaches,” **said Herb Nolan, Solomon Foundation Deputy Director**.

“In 2018 Bike to the Sea is celebrating 25 years of promoting a vision of communities connected by a trail to the Sea,” **said Clay Larson, Project Manager for Bike to the Sea**. “We are thrilled to work with the Baker administration and the Gateways Cities Program to make that vision a reality – creating new scenic open space for all to enjoy. The completion of the Northern Strand Community Trail will bring connectivity, economic development and safer, healthy active lifestyles to the communities of Lynn, Saugus, Revere, Malden and Everett.”

In June, Governor Charlie Baker [announced](#) a 60 percent increase in the budget of the Recreation Trails Program (RTP), allowing the DCR to expand its pool of [grant winners](#) who construct or maintain trails across the Commonwealth. Recently the Administration further increased funding to \$3.2 million per year for the next two years. Applications for the first round of grants that will take advantage of this funding are due on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Since 2015, under the Baker-Polito Administration, approximately 150 miles of new trail have been designed, planned, funded, and/or completed with trail rehabilitation and repair also becoming a major priority.

The announcement follows several notable trail expansions which have occurred this year. In June, Governor Baker announced a new 3.7-mile extension of the [Cape Cod Rail Trail](#), and in September Lt. Governor Karyn Polito presided over the completion of 3.5 additional miles along the [Blackstone River Greenway](#). Since 2015, the Baker-Polito Administration has constructed more than 20 major trail sections throughout the Commonwealth, including the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail in Adams, the Charles River Greenway's Braille Trail in Watertown, the Norwottuck Branch of the Mass Central Rail Trail in Northampton, Hadley, and Amherst, and the Neponset River Greenway in Boston and Milton.

The portion of the Northern Strand Trail within the rail right of way will be designed by the team of Brown, Richardson, and Rowe, landscape architects, and Stantec engineers. A separate team hired by the City of Lynn and Solomon Foundation will design the on-road section of the route in Lynn. The teams will coordinate their efforts and produce a single unified design for project bidding and construction. For more information regarding the Gateway City Parks Program, which funds the creation or restoration of significant urban parks and trails within the 26 Gateway Cities, please visit the program's [webpage](#).

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